

United Faculty of Florida - USF Chapter
10 September 2026
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Preparing for the Storm

We expect stormy weather this year, but we are also hopeful of some progress.

- **The Coming Year.** A lot depends on what happens on November 3 (if eligible, are you registered to vote?), but it looks very much like an academic year of crisis = danger + opportunity. For more, see below.

And a bit of red tape...

- **The Next Step on Recertification.** The Public Employees Relations Commission has accepted UFF's petition for recertification.

A lot depends on you. A union *is* its membership, and that means that the union works best when the employees that it represents are its members, and are engaged.

That brings us to a recurring glitch.

About UFF membership. When the Legislature passed a law (2023 Senate Bill 256) banning union dues payment by paycheck deduction, it not only inconvenienced the unions (which had to set up the eDues system) but also union members - some of whom failed to get into the eDues system.

Membership is determined by dues payment, so if you are not paying dues, you are not a member. Almost all members are paying dues via an ***Automated Clearing House*** (ACH), which means automatic payment from your checking account. Dues are collected every other week, and whenever dues are deducted from your account, the FEA computer sends you an email. Unless you have set up something else, **if you are not getting biweekly emails from the FEA computer, you are not paying dues, and are not a member.**

We have had faculty who thought they were members but had not set up eDues, and **when they got in trouble they**

discovered that UFF could not represent them in a grievance. If you think you are a member but are not getting biweekly emails from the FEA computer, contact ***the Chapter Secretary***.

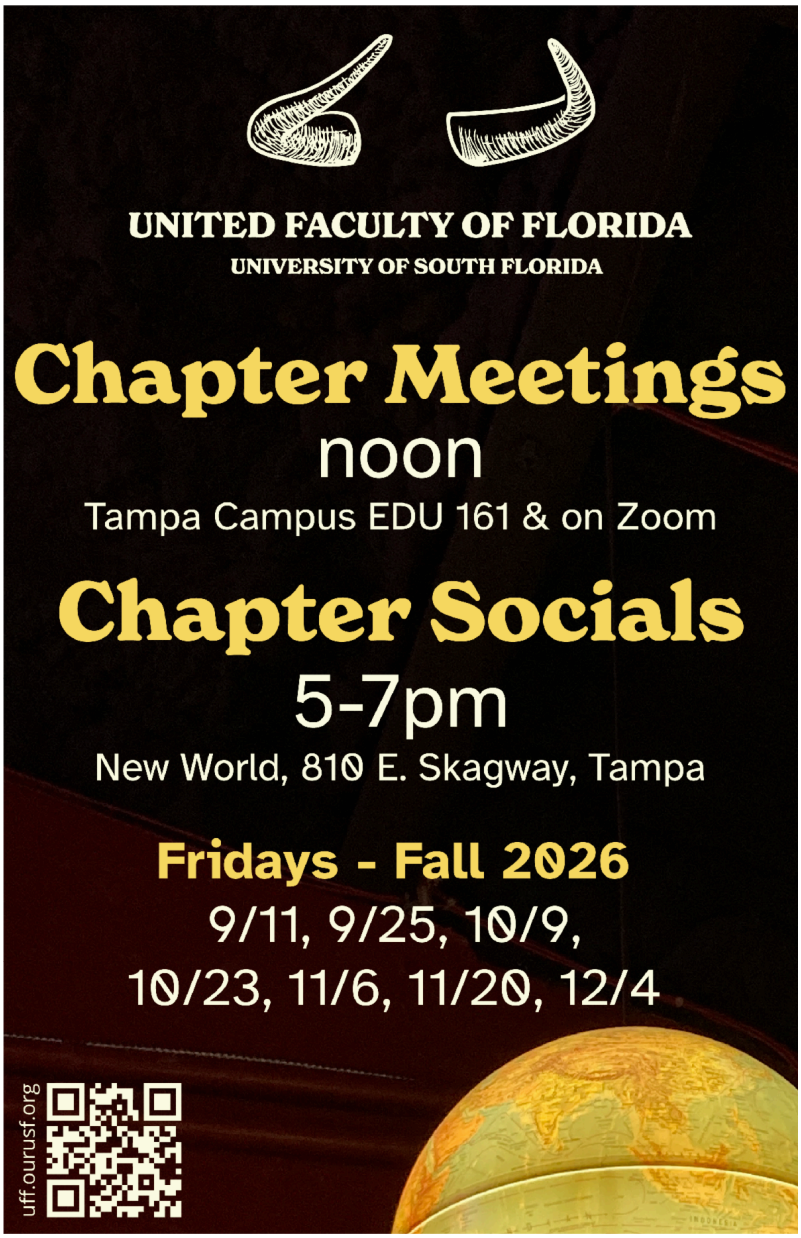
Setting up eDues is a bit of a hassle (which is probably why the Legislature passed SB 256), so the union put together these ***instructions***. Here is ***the page*** about eDues, and here is the link to the ***FEA form*** for joining the union and setting up eDues.

Chapter Meeting Tomorrow Friday at 12 noon on USF Tampa in EDU161 and on Zoom: here is *the link*. On ***the agenda***: Strategic Planning, the Central Labor Council and the midterms, fall organizing, and more. And here are the ***August 28 minutes***. For more information, contact ***the chapter secretary***.

Upcoming Events

Meetings and events are posted in ***the Events Calendar*** on the ***UFF USF website***. Here are events for the next few weeks:

- **September 11 at 12 noon: Chapter Meeting in EDU 161 and on Zoom.**
- *September 11 at 5 pm: Social at New World Tampa at 810 E Skagway in Tampa.*
- **September 14 at 9 am: USF Board of Trustees Strategic Plan Workshop on USF Tampa in Traditions Hall.**
- September 16 at 2:30 pm: USF Faculty Senate on USF Tampa in MSC 4200 and St. Petersburg in Bay220 and on Teams.
- **September 25 at 12 noon: Chapter Meeting in EDU 161 and on Zoom.**
- *September 25 at 5 pm: Social at New World Tampa at 810 E Skagway in Tampa.*
- September 30 at time TBA: Florida State University System Board of Governors ***Committee Workship*** on the University of Florida at place TBA. What mischief they will be up to is TBA.



The Coming Year

This coming year is going to be critical.

After sixteen years of hostile governors and their appointees, agencies from the State University System Board of Governors to the Florida Board of Education to the the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC) have politicized education, attacked educators, and undermined the mission of the educational system. The consequences of bad governance are becoming visible, and the time for change may be coming.

The USF Chapter of the United Faculty of Florida is going to be following the refrain, *think globally and act locally*. Acting locally, salaries have not only not kept up with inflation, **salaries have not kept up with median wage growth** nationwide (more on *that* in future Biweeklies). Fortunately, USF's leadership is (finally!) beginning to worry about this, although they seem to be

waiting until after November 3. There are things that can be done - this academic year - and we intend to press them on this point.

Meanwhile, PERC is very likely going to call for and conduct a certification election at a time and with a method designed to minimize turnout. By state law, each public employees union (except for police and fire) must be recertified annually, and for us, that means **winning an election that must have majority turnout in order to be valid**. Like all other public colleges and universities in Florida that faced recertification, we've won the certification elections overwhelmingly, but with less than majority turnout. **We will need majority turnout in the next election - or the contract will become unenforceable.**

(For a bit recent red tape, see *The Next Step in Recertification* below.)

This state law is unconstitutional, but litigation is likely to take years, and meanwhile, there would be no enforceable contract. That brings us to Tallahassee.

No matter what the outcome in November 3, the Legislature and its leadership are unlikely to be as afraid of the new governor as they were of Governor DeSantis. Legislators are likely to be more responsive to their constituents, their communities, and to the public interest. **But the time to start pressing them on this point is now**, before the next legislative session. New bills go into the hopper at the beginning of the legislative session, so **the time to influence what's in those bills is before the session begins**.

Globally, the numerous lawsuits (and there are more coming) will continue. As ***Mr. Dooley*** observed, the courts follow the election returns, so again, November 3 matters. But there is also the economy, which affects not only voters but the powerful. And it affects what the university administration can do, no matter what it wants or is politically pressed to do.

We need to be prepared for anything.

President Kennedy popularized the idea that the Chinese word for "crisis" was composed of two characters, one for "danger" and one for "opportunity". That was not quite right: there are three characters involved, and (oversimplifying) while crisis = danger + critical point, opportunity = critical point + ability.

"Critical point" means that timing matters. And we are at a critical point: things could go any of several directions, and we faculty have a rare opportunity to influence where we are going and where USF is going. But if we are to influence the future in a

positive way, we have to act. That means all of us, not just a few activists.

The Next Step in Recertification

Thanks to recent legislation, each public employee union in Florida (except for police and fire) that does not have 60% of the employees it represents as dues-paying members must be recertified *every year*. This means filing a petition (those SOI cards), and then having the Public Employees Relations Commission (PERC) conduct an election: in order to be recertified, a majority of the represented employees (members and non-members) must vote, and a majority of the votes must be in favor of the union.

But by Florida Statute 447.305, the union must register with PERC first, and we have been advised that a copy of the registration form must be made available to represented employees. So here is ***a link*** to the form and an amended form.

Next up: the Chapter submitted a hundred more SOI cards than the law required, so...will PERC accept the petition? Stay tuned.

EDues issues

If you are not paying dues, you are not a UFF member - and unless you are paying dues by check, you would be getting biweekly notices from FEA's computer about dues deductions. ***If you are not receiving FEA's receipts, you are not paying eDues.*** **For assistance, contact us.**



Union Membership

If you are not a union member, please ***join today*** (the form connects automatically to the eDues form, so you will want to have your banking information or checkbook information handy). We are stronger standing together in solidarity.

If you have difficulties with the eDues form, see the ***instructions***.

Membership Status

If you are going on a reduced-pay leave or sabbatical, or if you are retiring or resigning, please contact us so we can adjust your eDues accordingly: visit the ***UFF Membership Policy webpage***. In particular, **if you are retiring, we encourage you to consider joining the UFF Retired chapter:** here is ***their webpage***.

The Contract Can Help

A contract can help when you get in trouble - *if you use it*. If your contractual rights are violated, you have the right to file a grievance seeking redress, and we can help. But remember, **you have thirty days from the time you knew or should have known about the contract violation to file the grievance, so if something happens, contact us asap**. For more information, see the ***Grievance Page***.



Follow us on Social Media
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Join us on Social Media

We have a Facebook group: see ***United Faculty of Florida at USF***. This page is a place where UFF members can exchange thoughts and ideas. **The page is "public", but only dues-paying UFF members are eligible to post items on the page. If you are a UFF member, ask to join on the page, and the moderator will invite every UFF member that asks to join.** Non-members are welcome to look (but you need a Facebook account to do that). So check us out ... join the conversation.

- We have a blog: see ***The USF Faculty Blog***. This has news items as they come up.
- We are on Twitter (aka X), so follow us on Twitter / X via ***@UffUsf***.
- We are on Instagram, so check us out at Instagram ***@usf_uff***.
- We even have a You-Tube channel: ***check out our videos***.

We are revamping our publicity machine, and if you are interested in social media, in membership, or in conversations with you colleagues across campus, *come join the campaign*. Contact the *chapter secretary*.

USF United Support Fund for Food Pantries

Many of our students are struggling during with food insecurity, and the USF Foundation is supporting the ***USF Food Pantries*** to help out. They are accepting non-perishable donations, but one can also make monetary donations for the pantries at all three campuses.

Details, Details

The USF-UFF Chapter website is ***http://www.uff.ourusf.org***, and our e-mail address is ***uff@ourusf.org***. About this broadcast: This Newsletter was broadcast from Constant Contact, and is intended for all members of the UFF USF Bargaining unit (USF faculty and professionals at most departments). A (usually identical) version will be broadcast to the USF-Talk group from ***mccolm@usf.edu***.

If you do not want to receive the UFF Biweekly, you can unsubscribe below or contacting ***the Chapter Secretary***. If you do not receive the Biweekly, but want to, contact ***the Chapter Secretary***.

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